

**DECISION MEMO**  
**TO CONTINUE USE FOR FOURTEEN ISOLATED, PRE-ANILCA, AND RESEARCH**  
**/ADMINISTRATIVE CABINS**  
**USDA. FOREST SERVICE**  
**TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST, WRANGELL RANGER DISTRICT**

**BACKGROUND**

Cabins have been authorized on the Wrangell Ranger District, Tongass National Forest, since the late 1950's. The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA), signed on December 2, 1980, allows for continuation of cabin permits in Alaska, with certain limitations. The existing permits for these cabins expire December 31, 2020. This decision will continue the use of these cabins for the next five years. Figure 1 is a typical cabin.



Figure 1: Cabin #8 2019

**DECISION**

I have decided to authorize the continuation of special use permits for the fourteen cabins described below, and shown on Exhibit 1, for the next five years. All fourteen cabins are located in the Stikine-Leconte Wilderness. The new cabin permits will expire on December 31, 2025. No changes in use, additions to the cabin structures or changes to the permit sites are authorized.

**ISOLATED CABINS**

	Permit Holder	General Location	Legal Description
1	Angerman, Kyle S.	Andrews Island, Stikine River	Section 18 T <sup>1</sup> 60S <sup>2</sup> , R <sup>3</sup> 84E <sup>4</sup> , CRM <sup>5</sup>
2	Churchill, Daniel	Red Slough/Kikahe River,	Section 28 T60S, R86E, CRM
3	Davies, Winston Justin	Limb Island, Stikine River	Section 14 T60S, R83E, CRM
4	Fisher, Loy	Shakes Slough, Stikine River	Section 25 T59S, R84E, CRM
5	Gross, Jared	Red Slough/Kikahe River,	Section 28 T60S, R86E, CRM
6	Gucker, Gabriel L.	Gut Island, Stikine River	Section 5 T61S, R83E, CRM

<sup>1</sup> Township; <sup>2</sup> South; <sup>3</sup> Range; <sup>4</sup> East; <sup>5</sup> Copper River Meridian

	Permit Holder	General Location	Legal Description
7	Hammer, Jacob A.	North bank Stikine River above Kakwan Point,	Section 4 T60S, R84E, CRM
8	Harding, Ty E.	Mainland, North Arm Stikine River	Section 17 T60S, R83E, CRM
9	Hay, Jayson C. c/o Chuck Hay	Sergief Island, Stikine River	Section 15 T61S, R83E, CRM
10	Powell, Daniel	Limb Island, Stikine River	Section 15 T60S, R83E, CRM

The ten individuals listed above hold permits (use code 1201) for privately owned cabins that existed and were authorized prior to December 2, 1980. These individuals may continue to use their cabins for personal recreation. Continuation of these cabin permits is in accordance with ANILCA Section 1303(d).

#### PRE-ANILCA CABINS

	Permit Holder	General Location	Legal Description
11	Hamley, Charles (Lanny)	Cottonwood Islands, Stikine River,	Section 26 T60S, R83E, CRM
12	Hjort, Stanley	Farm Island, Knig Slough,	Section 18 T60S, R83E, CRM

The two individuals listed above hold permits (use code 374) for privately owned cabins that existed but were not authorized prior to December 2, 1980. These individuals may continue to use their cabins for traditional and customary activities. The continuation of these cabin permits is in accordance with the ANILCA Section 1303(b).

#### RESEARCH and ADMINISTRATION CABINS

	Permit Holder	General Location	Legal Description
13	Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation	Gut Island, Stikine River	Section 5 T61S, R83E, CRM
14	Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation	Kakwan Point, Stikine River	Section 5 T60S, R84E, CRM

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game may continue to use these two cabins for wildlife conservation and fisheries research, according to the terms of the permits (use code 422). Continuation of these cabin permits is in accordance with ANILCA Section 1303(d).



Seven separate environmental analysis for the permitting of cabins on the Wrangell District have been conducted since 1995. The most recent Decision Memo to Continue Special Use Authorizations for Fifteen Isolated, Research, and pre-ANILCA Cabins was issued by the District Ranger in November 2015. All of the past analysis documents and decisions are included in the project file.

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA). The applicable category of actions is identified in agency procedures as, "Issuance of a new special use authorization for a new term to replace an existing or expired special use authorization when the only changes are administrative, there are no changes to the authorized facilities or increases in the scope or intensity of authorized activities, and the applicant or holder is in full compliance with the terms and conditions of the special use authorization." (36 CFR 220.6(e) (15)) This category of action is applicable to my decision for continuation of the cabin permits.

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I took into account the following resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species – A combined biological assessment, biological evaluation (BE) and wildlife report was completed in 2015. The level of influence determination for all threatened, endangered, sensitive and management indicator species was negligible/no effect/no impacts. That report is included in the project record at the Wrangell Ranger District.

If any previously undiscovered endangered, threatened, candidate or sensitive wildlife species or key habitats for any management indicator species (MIS) or other species identified in the BE are encountered at any point in time prior to or during the implementation of this project, a District Biologist would be consulted and appropriate measures enacted.

The BE prepared for sensitive plants in 2010 was reviewed and found suitable for continuation. No sensitive species will experience impacts that would cause or contribute to a trend towards federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species. If a Region 10 Sensitive plant species is detected the Wrangell Ranger District Botanist will be contacted and appropriate measures enacted.

An invasive plant risk assessment was prepared in 2020, and cabin sites were inspected by a specialist for invasive plants. Individual permits will have the Alaska Region permit clauses for the prevention and control of invasive plant species, listing invasive species found at each site.

- Floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – Thirteen of the fourteen cabins are within the floodplain of the Stikine River or on the river's tidal estuary wetland. There is

no uncertainty that the degree of the effect of these cabins is not significant to the functional value of the flood plain or wetland. None of the authorized cabin sites are within a municipal watershed.

- Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – All fourteen cabins are within the congressionally designated Stikine-LeConte Wilderness. The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, which designated the Wilderness, provides for the continuation of the cabin permits. None of the cabins are within a wilderness study area, or national recreation area.
- Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas – None of the cabins are within a 2001 inventoried roadless area or potential wilderness area.
- Research natural areas – None of the cabins are within a research natural area.
- American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – A Forest Service archeologist has reviewed this project and none of the cabins are within American Indian or Alaska Native religious or cultural sites
- Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – A Forest Service archeologist reviewed this project and made a determination of no archaeological sites or historic properties within the area of potential effect for the proposed project.

In 1994 Forest Service archaeologists completed a cultural resource survey and architectural assessment for structures within the Stikine-LeConte Wilderness (Hanks McCallum, Project 94-02-16-A). The cabins considered in this Decision Memo were revisited by Forest Service heritage resource specialists in the summer of 2005. Their findings, recorded as Project R2005100522016, indicate the continued use of these cabins will not result in ground disturbing activities, and therefore do not have the potential to affect historic properties. The permit holders are required to report any heritage resources discovered at the cabin site.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This action was listed as a proposal on the Tongass National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) in July 2020 and updated periodically during the analysis. No comments were received.

Public scoping was conducted in 1993, 1995, 2000 and 2005. The scoping process conducted as part of the 1995 renewal process included two mailings to about 500 people and agencies. The scoping process in 2005 included listing the project in the Tongass SOPA, and two solicitations for comment published in the Wrangell Sentinel. No public comments were generated from any of these scoping efforts.

In 2010, 2015 and 2020, the responsible official determined that based on the nature of the project and the past lack of public response, that the scoping process would be limited to inclusion in the SOPA as stated above.



Internal Forest Service scoping for this project was also conducted during 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2020. In 2020, only concerns for invasive plants were identified.

## FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This decision is consistent with the 2016 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). The project was designed to be consistent with Forest Plan direction relevant to authorized cabin activities.

All of the fourteen cabin sites are located within an area identified in the Forest Plan as having a Land Use Designation (LUD) of Wilderness. Direction for the management of Wilderness is to maintain the enduring resource of Wilderness as directed by the Wilderness Act of 1964, subject to the special provisions and exceptions in ANILCA and the Tongass Timber Reform Act of 1990. Forest Plan direction includes protecting the undeveloped character of Wilderness by following legislative guidelines regarding permanent improvements or human occupation. Wilderness direction also provides for the continuation of cabin authorizations that predate December 2, 1980 consistent with ANILCA Section 1303(d); and the continuation of authorizations for cabins that did not have a valid authorization prior to December 2, 1980 consistent with ANILCA Section 1303(b).

## ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OPPORTUNITIES

This action falls within a category of actions which are not subject to administrative review opportunities.

## IMPLEMENTATION DATE

This decision may be implemented immediately.

## CONTACT

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CLINT R. KOLARICH

District Ranger

11/4/20

Date



In September of 1995 the Forest Supervisor delegated the Wrangell District Ranger authority to approve subsequent cabin permit renewals. This decision and my approving of the subsequent cabin authorizations are consistent with that delegated authority. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## EXHIBIT 1

